

Natural Resource News in South Carolina

USDA-NRCS, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 950, Columbia, SC 29201

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USDA Provides Up to \$1.7 Million for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvements

Grants will develop and evaluate technology to improve fish and wildlife habitat

COLUMBIA, March 29, 2006—U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Bruce Knight today announced that up to \$1.7 million will be available through competitive grants to develop and evaluate technological tools for fish and wildlife habitat improvements. Proposals are due by April 27, 2006.

Individual grants will range from \$10,000 to \$200,000. Selected applicants may receive up to 50 percent of the project cost. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, up to half which may come from in-kind contributions. An exception allows for limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers, tribes, and community-based organizations to obtain up to 75 percent of project matching funds from in-kind contributions. State and local governments, federally recognized tribes, and non-governmental organizations, including colleges and universities, are encouraged to apply.

Project proposals should explain how the applicant plans to develop, test, implement and transfer innovative solutions that benefit fish and wildlife on cropland, grassland, forestland, rangeland, riparian areas, wetlands, streams, rivers, vernal pools and areas where farmland and urban land meet. Projects can be single or multi-purpose and can run from one to three years. They must address the following natural resource concerns on working agricultural land:

- effects of buffers, field borders and riparian areas on fish and wildlife;
- improvements to wetland restoration and management practices;
- grassland establishment and management for wildlife;
- evaluation of fisheries habitat, stream restoration and management;
- use of electronic technology, including Geographic Information Systems, to measure fish and wildlife response to conservation practices; and;
- improvements of fish and wildlife management systems for limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers and Native American tribes.

For more information, please visit the grants.gov Web site at <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=8643> and click on "Full Announcement."

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